

## **WHAT IS 'RUN THE RIVER'**

"Run of the River" board game, presented by Waterwatch Victoria, is a fantastic new curriculum initiative for 2006. The game explores the complexities of maintaining healthy and sustainable river systems in order for water to be enjoyed for a variety of uses.

In playing the game, students are introduced to key concepts about how natural river flows change seasonally and between years and how these flows affect the whole ecosystem. In particular, the game explores a relatively new area of river management - a river's right to have sufficient water flowing to sustain the riverine habitat. For instance, in Victoria the environment's share of water, an Environmental Water Reserve, will be secured for all rivers across the state. These concepts, tested with a series of challenging questions, encourage students to think about the social, economic and environmental aspects of river management.

The game is aimed at Years 9 to 12 students and features two playing levels of increasing complexity. Level One helps students understand the natural cycles of Victoria's rivers and how water flows affect river habitats and species. Level Two of the game situates players in a catchment in which decisions about management of the rivers need to be made. Players work together to negotiate the trade-offs involved in satisfying the human and environmental demands on water resources to ultimately manage a healthy, sustainable river system.

Comprehensive teacher notes accompany "Run of the River" and explain how the game complies with current CSF 11 and with the new Victorian Essential Learning Standards Levels 5 and 6 for Science and Geography, Interpersonal Development, and Civics and Citizenship.

The teacher notes also include a range of pre and post game student activities to compliment and reinforce the concepts introduced in playing "Run of the River". The additional activities, such as exploring the roles of the numerous interest groups and agencies involved in managing a river, allows teachers to use the game as part of a major study on natural resource management or sustainability or as a stand-alone activity.

The game will be provided free of charge to interested schools throughout Victoria. By now, all secondary schools should have received information about the game. If this information hasn't been received by your school and you are interested in obtaining "Run of the River", please contact Waterwatch Victoria on ph. 9637 9971.

Your regional Waterwatch coordinator will be holding teacher game sessions when the games become available - a fun way to become familiar with the game (and get a competitive edge over the students!). Schools that have registered to receive copies of "Run of the River" will be contacted by their regional Waterwatch co-ordinator with details of the teacher game sessions.

The Run of the River board game was developed and supported by the Environmental Water Reserve and River Health Division as part of the Department of Sustainability and Environment's community awareness activities. Waterwatch is a partnership program supported regionally by Catchment Management Authorities, urban and rural water authorities, the Australian Government, local government, community groups and private businesses.